



THE  
**PRODIGAL SON**

*a parable*



THE  
**LOST SHEEP**  
AND THE LOST COIN

*a parable*



THE  
**SOWER**

*a parable*



THE  
**GOOD  
SAMARITAN**

*a parable*



THE  
**TOWER BUILDER**  
AND THE WARRING KING

*a parable*



THE  
**WHEAT  
AND THE  
TARES**

*a parable*



THE  
**SHREWD  
MANAGER**

*a parable*



THE  
**PHARISEE  
AND THE  
TAX COLLECTOR**

*a parable*



THE  
**FRIEND  
AT  
MIDNIGHT**

*a parable*

# PARABLES

*the greatest stories ever told*

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Some have defined parables as “stories by which something real in life is used as a means of presenting a moral thought.” They are usually stories or narratives taken from nature or from everyday human experiences. Perhaps the simplest definition of all is that a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

Parables are among the oldest and most common forms of teaching. Even the Old Testament contains many parables. One classic example is Nathan’s parable to David about the poor man with one little ewe lamb (2 Samuel 12:1-10). During His earthly ministry, Jesus used this medium of teaching almost constantly, and for a very good purpose.

Parables are meant to reveal simple, basic truths to those who are seeking to understand the Lord’s teaching, not to confuse His teaching with a wide range of endless theological speculation. The plain, simple truths contained in parables were meant to be carried away in the mind of the hearer, not examined under a microscope or dissected to reveal every minute detail. Therefore, as you study these parables look for the simplest explanation first – the general theme of the parable, then delve deeper into sub-meanings or sub-themes.

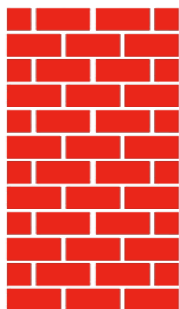
In his closing remarks to the church at Rome, the apostle Paul gives us this promise:

*“Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith; to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.” Romans 16:25-27*

Enjoy your study of the wonderful teachings of Jesus contained in His many parables. Your knowledge will surely be increased, and your life will truly be enriched.

Blessings,

Chad Thibodeaux and Don Minter



# THE TOWER BUILDER AND THE WARRING KING

READ Luke 14:28-33

*“So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”  
- Luke 14:33*

Do you count the cost before you undertake something important or before something of consequence is about to happen to you? Jesus' twin parable of the tower builder and the warring king challenges us to consider whether we count the cost where it really matters. How are these two illustrations similar and different at the same time? The builder of the tower is free to choose whether he will build or not.

The king whose country is being invaded has no choice but to do something or meet disaster! Both must carefully think through what they must do and then face the consequences of their actions. When Jesus calls us to be His disciples, He wants us to be clear about what it will cost us to follow Him. We must "renounce" everything, including our very lives, for His sake. He, in turn, offers us a deal we cannot refuse – unending joy and everlasting life with God in His kingdom. While we are free to choose whether we will follow Him or not, we must, nonetheless, reckon whether we can afford to refuse His demands. Scripture warns us of the consequences of our choice: we lose what we keep and we gain what we lose.

Are you ready to count the cost for following the Lord?



*"Lord, you gave Your life for my sake, that I might know the joy and freedom of life in Your kingdom forever. Help me to count the cost and to joyfully embrace Your will for my life."*

## Daily Bible Study

In one sense, the thrust of this passage is obvious; in another sense, it is somewhat uncertain. Transparently, the explicit point of the passage is that anyone who wishes to be a Christian must give up everything. Practically, however, given that conversion makes little change in our family status, our careers, or our possessions, how exactly does Jesus expect us to apply this text? What practical difference does it make for us to believe in Jesus?

### Monday

- Describe the events of this parable.
- In recent events Jesus has been very blunt, to the point, and what some might consider even offensive. Why do you think that in verse 25 there is still a large crowd following Him?

### Tuesday

- How can we reconcile Jesus' command to love others and His apparent calling to hate others?
- Based on what Jesus says in the passages in Matthew, how can we explain what He meant in Luke 14:26? Did Jesus mean that His followers would have to hate the people who meant the most to them?
- Why was loving Christ supremely a requirement for following Him?

### Wednesday

- What does Jesus say are the three bottom-line requirements to being His disciple? (See verses 26, 27, and 33)
- What do you think "carrying your own cross" includes? (v. 27)
- Read Luke 14:27 and Galatians 2:20. David Platt discusses how all of your decisions are no longer yours to make, but rather Christ's. Do *you* make decisions and then seek God's approval of them, or do you look to *Christ* to make all of your decisions? Over what decision that you currently face are you not letting Christ reign?

### Thursday

- Read verses 28-30 again. What costs do you think Jesus would say need to be counted in today's world?
- What are the two great endeavors that Jesus gives as pictures of discipleship? How do those illustrate discipleship? (28-32)
- Read Luke 14:33-35. Was Jesus literally telling His audience to give up everything they owned for Christ?

### Friday

- What does salt have to do with this discussion?



# My Oikos

## My 8-15 Most Wanted!

*I will faithfully pray for the salvation or renewal of 8-15 people in my world. I will attempt to reach them for Christ through my personal witness and local church ministry efforts*

Relatives

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Friends

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Work/School

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Leisure

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The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. James 5:16

# THE LOST SHEEP



READ Luke 15:1-7

*“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?”*

*– Luke 15:4*

Parables, by their very nature, are rooted in the real life experiences of those who are listening, and that can be problematic for moderns, long removed from the every day experiences of sheep herding. And so the question, “What man of you...” leaves us unsure of the answer. “Would the average sheep herder leave ninety-nine sheep unattended, to go searching for that one lost sheep?” Jesus seems to suggest the answer is self-evident. Of course they would. It was their job to protect the sheep!

And therein lies the problem for most of us. Taking care of the ‘sheep’ is not our primary job. As one recent reader proclaimed, “I don’t have any sheep!” Thus, so few of us have thought of sheep care as a primary responsibility. Our lives are filled with day-to-day activities, few of which are centered around the responsibility of caring for sheep. And so comes the challenge of Jesus to reconsider our responsibility in caring for each other in the same way a shepherd would care for sheep.

By developing an intentional oikos we begin to acknowledge the ‘sheep’ that God has given for us to care for in a primary kind of way. It is a first step toward embracing an oikos ethic into our day-to-day lifestyles. You may soon discover yourself waking each morning with a deep concern for how each of your ‘sheep’ are getting along. And then that startling moment of concern awakens deep within you, when rising in the morning you discover one of your sheep has gone missing, and you suddenly find yourself consumed with the need to go find that lost sheep. You unexpectedly discover you have become a keeper of sheep...



*“Lord, grant me the passion for my oikos that drives me to seek anyone in my oikos that has gone missing. Help me to resist the temptation to find contentment in the ninety-nine who have remained faithful and close at hand...”*

## Daily Bible Study

It is doubtful that every person Jesus spoke to concerning the parable of the lost sheep was a shepherd; nonetheless, they were familiar enough with the care of sheep that they were able to glean His intent from the teaching. Ultimately, Jesus' concern was to introduce the 'ethic' of the Kingdom of God into the lives of folks just like us. As you study this parable this week see if you can glean the principles of the Kingdom of God and how they ought to impact your values as you journey along.

### Monday

- Who is listening to the parable of the lost sheep?
- What drove Jesus to tell this parable?
- Why were the Pharisees and scribes grumbling?

### Tuesday

- Why do you think Jesus told a parable about herding sheep?
- Do you think the average shepherd would spend time looking for that one lost sheep?

### Wednesday

- How long does Jesus say the shepherd will search for the sheep?
- What is the significance of placing the sheep on his shoulders to carry it home?

### Thursday

- Do you think there are any dangers in leaving the 99 unattended?
- Whose responsibility is it to care for the 99 left in the open field?
- Explain why the shepherd calls his friends to celebrate his find? How might we do that in the life of the church?

### Friday

- Does it surprise you that the parable ends with a reference to repentance?
- Why do you think Jesus finishes the parable with a reference to 'the joy in heaven'?
- So now that you have settled in on the parable, how do you go about looking for lost sheep?





**READ Mark 4:1-29**

*“The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how.”  
– Mark 4:26-27*

Have you ever shared your faith with someone you love, but it just doesn't seem to stick? Has the thought of one of your *oikos* living an eternity without Christ caused you to have many sleepless nights? What more can you do?

The parable of the sower is a secret of the kingdom of God, and to me it is one of the most encouraging of all the parables. Jesus is speaking of the ecosystem of a conversion. He explains it as a coming to harvest by a patient expectation that God will work.

The key to this parable is, “the seed sprouts and grows, though the farmer does not know how.” That is, there are forces at work that will be faithful to perform their work—whether a farmer frets about it or not. Farmers do what they can do but then God must work.

The same is true with salvation. We do not have the ability as believers to save anyone in our *oikos*, but we must consistently plant seeds and rely on the power of God to bring them unto salvation.

This is exactly what Paul describes for us in 1 Corinthians 3:9a: “For we are God's fellow workers.”

One of the most destructive forces at work in the church today is our insistent demand for instant results. We want to have immediate conversions, immediate responses every time we speak. We tend not to allow time for the Word to take root and grow and come to harvest.



*“Thank You, Lord that I can trust that as I do my part and sow the seed of Your Word wherever I can, You will do the rest.”*

## Daily Bible Study

Even though Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, He didn't always find a receptive audience. And although His miracles and other mighty works, which He performed, were unmistakably performed by divine power, He was still rejected. Some thought Jesus performed these miracles by the power of Satan. While the people of Jesus' day had ears to hear, their ears had become hard of hearing, and even though they had eyes to see, their eyes had become blinded to the truth. To illustrate to His disciples that not everyone will be receptive to the message of the good news, Jesus taught this parable.

### Monday

- Describe the events in this parable.
- Who is the sower, even though the sower is not specifically mentioned (Compare with: Matthew 13:37)?
- What is the seed (Matthew 13:19a)?

### Tuesday

- Describe the first kind of soil mentioned in the parable (the "wayside").
- What or who is represented by the birds (Luke 8:12)?

### Wednesday

- Describe the second kind of soil mentioned in the parable (the "stony places").
- Describe the third kind of soil mentioned in the parable (the seed that fell "among the thorns").

### Thursday

- Explain how seed falling among thorns is like those troubled by "the cares of this world" (Matthew 13:22b).
- Explain how seed falling among thorns is like those troubled by "the deceitfulness of riches" (Matthew 13:22c).
- Explain how seed falling among thorns is like those troubled by "the pleasures of life" (Luke 8:14).

### Friday

- Describe the fourth kind of soil mentioned in the parable (the "good ground").
- What kind of fruit are Christians supposed to bear?
- What does it mean that not all bear the same amount of harvest – "some a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty" (Matthew 13:23)?





# THE PRODIGAL SON

READ Luke 15:11-32

*“And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this son of mine dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to celebrate.”  
– Luke 15:23-24*

It may be the most well known of all the parables of Jesus, describing the anguish of every parent whose children make decisions most would call less than wise. Most difficult of all in those periods of rebellion may be those moments when God calls you to simply join the waiting father on the front porch. Stillness on the front porch can be excruciatingly difficult for those who love deeply. Nonetheless, even for God, there are those moments calling for patience as ‘freedom’ exercises autonomy in self-destructive ways. It is the agony every parent dreads.

But understand as well that the period of ‘sowing wild oats’ is not without consequences, and some are long lasting. Yet, at some point those consequences may send the prodigal running home. How you receive those prodigals as they return is critical to their recovery. Consider how important the reaction of the father is to the son as he returns to his home.

Once again Jesus reminds us of God’s delight when His children, even those wildly destructive children, return home. But He also reminds us that not everyone is pleased to bestow grace on those who return home after wasting the resources that God provides in life. Thus, the parable is really a story about oikos. And oikos is rarely neat and clean. There are often those awkward moments when the ‘foolish’ return home seeking grace and redemption. Read this parable carefully and consider how you might go about extending redemption and grace toward those who have lived foolishly.



*“Lord, grant me the wisdom needed to know when to go and search for prodigal, and when to simply join my heavenly Father as we wait on the front porch for the prodigal to return home. Grant me as well the patience needed to simply pray, sit and wait...”*

## Daily Bible Study

As you read this parable throughout the week place yourself in the role of each of the key characters. Consider what it would be like to be the younger brother, the older brother and the father. Chances are that during the course of your lifetime, you will indeed, experience the three dominant roles in this parable.

### Monday

- How old do you assume the boys in this parable to be?
- Are you surprised that the father was willing to divide the land between the boys?
- Does the reaction of the youngest son surprise you?

### Tuesday

- What does the youngest son do with his inheritance?
- What does the older brother do with his inheritance?

### Wednesday

- Why do you think the father did not go after the youngest son?
- Why doesn't the older brother go after the younger brother?

### Thursday

- What are the consequences of 'squandering' the resources the father provided?
- What causes the younger brother to return to his senses?
- Did you anticipate the reaction of the father to his returning son?

### Friday

- What do you think is the primary concern of the older brother in regards to his returning brother?
- Why do you think the older brother never joins the celebration?
- Evaluate the father's response to his oldest son. Do you think the older brother ever accepted his father's approach to the younger brother?
- What resources do you think the father provided for his younger son upon his return?





THE  
FRIEND  
AT  
MIDNIGHT

READ Luke 11:1-13

*And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he will answer him from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything?'"*  
Luke 11:5-7 RSV

Perhaps you well know that strange, sinking sensation when someone asks for help and you have not known what to say. Immediately there is a sense of pressure, almost terror. "What shall I say?" Perhaps a neighbor comes for coffee and out of it a question arises or a problem is laid bare; perhaps a school friend stammers out a question as you are walking to school, or a letter arrives with an urgent plea. Perhaps a friend invites you out to lunch and over the dessert pours out a pitiful tale, or your child brings home a problem from school and stands expectantly, waiting for an answer and you ask yourself, "What can I say?"

The best you can do is stall and hope for a quiet moment when you can rush to your Great Neighbor and cry out to him, "A friend has come, and I have nothing to set before him." This happens often, doesn't it? It is out of such moments of deep necessity that true prayer is born.

When we need Him the most Jesus instructs us to ask and it will be given, seek and we will find, knock and the door will be opened even at the midnight hour.



*"Lord Jesus, in this moment, we ask that these words may come with fresh and vital meaning to our heart; that we may see that there is a vast and great experience of thy blessing and power lying before us, waiting for us to step out upon the basis of thy word alone; that there are things we need to ask for and take immediately from thy hand, others that we need to seek for, still others for which we need to knock and wait, and knock again, knowing that in every case without exception your word is sure, your answer is true. It shall be given, we shall find, it shall be opened. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

## Daily Bible Study

While most of the parables of Jesus dealt with the theme of the kingdom of heaven, some are responses to specific questions Jesus was asked by either His disciples or even by His enemies.

This parable is Jesus' response to a question He was asked about prayer by one of the disciples. Luke writes, *"Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.'"* (Luke 11:1). Jesus did three things in answering this request. First, He told them how to pray and what we should pray for. Second, He taught a parable which stressed the importance of being persistent in prayer. Finally, He followed up the parable with an explanation of what He had intended to illustrate.

### Monday

Examine the following passages and describe the prayer habits of Jesus.

- a. Mark 1:35.
- b. Luke 5:16.
- c. Luke 6:12-13.
- d. John 17.
- e. Matthew 26:36-44.
- f. Matthew 27:46 and Luke 23:34, 46.

### Tuesday

- Jesus teaches a lesson on prayer by giving an example of how one should pray, and what should be included in that prayer (Luke 11:2-4). Jesus taught a similar lesson on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount. What did Jesus mean by the words "in this manner, therefore, pray" (Matthew 6:9-15)?

### Wednesday

- Compare the two lessons on prayer (Luke 11:2-4 with Matthew 6:9-15). What do these lessons teach regarding how we should pray, and what should be included in our prayers?
- Describe the events of the parable known as "The Friend at Midnight" (Luke 11:5-8).

### Thursday

- What does Jesus teach about the importance of persistence in our prayers (Luke 11:9-10)?

### Friday

- What was Jesus trying to tell His disciples in Luke 11:11-13?





# THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

**READ Matthew 13:24-40**

*“...but while he was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also”  
– Matthew 13:25-26*

Many years ago I bought an old home in Indianapolis and began the tedious process of remodeling both the home and the yard. The previous owner had let the yard run wild and I was having a difficult time determining the flowers from the weeds in the flowerbeds. So, I called a landscaping friend to give me a hand. I asked him what I thought was a very simple question, “Can you come over to my home and point out for me which plants are weeds and which ones are flowers?” His response has stuck with these many years later, “Oh no, I don’t need to come over, telling the difference is really easy. If you like it, it’s a flower, if you don’t like it, it’s a weed.” And with that he proclaimed I now knew everything I needed to know about flowers and weeds in my flowerbeds.

The problem with his insightful information is that you often can’t tell if you like the plant or not until the flowers actually appear, or don’t appear, depending on the plant. But, given enough time, you soon discover which plants you like and which ones you don’t. And so it is in the Kingdom of God. Given enough time, you will soon discover which ‘plants’ you like, and which ones you don’t, which ones are ‘wheat’ and which ones are ‘weeds’.

I have discovered over the years that friends are a lot like the plants in my flowerbeds. It’s not until those relationships have really matured that I am able to discern who are the keepers (wheat) and who are the non-keepers (weeds). And then comes the really hard part. I have discovered over the years the power of ‘Grace’ to transform even the nasty weed into the most beautiful flower. And that leaves me wondering about the wisdom of ever pulling out those weeds in my oikos.



*“Lord, help me to be patient with the weeds appearing in my oikos. Help me to resist the temptation to plow under the harvest you have intended out of my frustration with their current condition.”*

## Daily Bible Study

The reality of any oikos, like it or not, is the presence of 'weeds'. And you will inevitably face the temptation to purge your oikos, to cleanse it of those pesky weeds. But such is not the way of Jesus. As you reflect on this parable throughout the week consider how you can unleash the grace of God into the lives of those 'weeds' who live and hang out with the 'wheat'. Consider how you might encourage more together time for the wheat and weeds in your oikos.

### Monday

- Who is the man sowing the good seed?
- How did the 'weeds' appear in his fields?
- Who is the enemy in this parable?

### Tuesday

- Who are servants of the master who notice the 'weeds'?
- What is their solution to the 'weed' problem?

### Wednesday

- Why is the master careful to not have the 'weeds' removed from the harvest field?
- What is the master's solution to the problem?
- Do you think we ever arrive at the harvest time with those in our oikos?

### Thursday

- Do you believe God is able to turn weeds into beautiful flowers (wheat)?
- What are the inherent dangers of allowing the wheat and weeds to grow together?

### Friday

- Are you sometimes tempted to label those in your oikos as wheat or weeds?
- Is there ever a time when the weeds should be harvested and burned?
- Why should we use extreme caution before determining anyone to be a weed?





# THE SHREWD MANAGER

READ Luke 16:1-15

*"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."  
Luke 16:13 RSV*

Some time ago I read of a Christian farmer who discovered that his favorite cow had given birth to twin calves. He said to his wife, "You know, dear, I think we ought to give one of these calves to the Lord. We will raise one for ourselves and give one to the Lord who has given us this unexpected blessing." She said, "Which one are you going to give to the Lord?" "Well," he said. "I haven't decided. We'll treat them alike and feed them the same and when it comes time to market them, we will decide which one to give to the Lord." So he fed the calves, took care of them, and they grew through the summer. Then one day he came into the house looking miserable, and his wife said, "What is the matter?" "Oh," he said, "a terrible thing has happened. The Lord's calf has died." She said, "But I thought you hadn't chosen yet which one it was." "Oh, yes," he said, "all the time I was thinking that the white calf would be the Lord's, and it was the Lord's calf that died." Such moments come as revelations of where our heart is really centered.

This is what Jesus said. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." And if we mean to serve God, let us listen to this word of Jesus:

*"...make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails [and it shall] they [the friends made by means of this] may receive [welcome] you into [the enrichment and the enlargement of life of] the eternal habitations." (Luke 16:9 RSV)*



*"Jesus, thank you for the healing power of this truth in our life. If we have been allowing some cancer of greediness to rob us of your blessing, please forgive us and remove this from us even though we admit there will be pain. To you alone be the glory. Amen."*

## Daily Bible Study

The Parable of the Unjust Steward is one, which was directed specifically to the disciples of Jesus, although the Pharisees happened to overhear what Jesus said and derided Him. In this parable, Jesus not only gives the parable itself, but also gives the interpretation of the parable. While many consider this parable difficult to understand, since it appears on the surface that Jesus is teaching His disciples to be dishonest, nothing could be further from the truth. The parable has one central theme – one main point. Jesus is teaching His disciples to exercise shrewdness, to be sharp and aware, to be “street smart” when it comes to handling material wealth.

### Monday

- Describe the events of the Parable of the Shrewd Manager.
- What did Jesus mean by the statement, “For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light” (Luke 16:8b)? Explain.

### Tuesday

- Why is “mammon” (riches) called “unrighteous mammon” (Luke 16:9)?
- Luke 16:9 presents various problems with the interpretation. Some believe the “friends” mentioned in this verse are God the Father and the Son, while others believe the “friends” are those who helped the unjust steward. How do you understand this verse? Explain.

### Wednesday

- Explain the two maxims found in Luke 16:10:
  - a. “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much.” (v. 10a)
  - b. “He who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.” (v. 10b)

### Thursday

- What is the point Jesus is attempting to make in verse 11?
- Why is it impossible to serve “two masters” (Luke 16:13)?

### Friday

- Why did the Pharisees deride Jesus (Luke 16:14-15)?
- Explain the response Jesus gave the Pharisees (Luke 16:15).





# THE GOOD SAMARITAN

## READ Luke 10:25-37

*And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."  
Luke 10:25-27*

Of all the questions that could ever be asked, of all the questions that could ever be answered, none is more important than this one. What shall I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus answered by telling the story of the Good Samaritan.

This particular story is so well known that it has actually become an idiom for unusual sacrificial kindness. We call people good Samaritans who find people in need and help them in unusual ways. To call someone a Good Samaritan is to grant to them a compliment. Our familiarity may cause us to think we know what the story really is about and what it was intended to convey, when in fact most of us don't.

The story is told to a non-believer, a self-righteous man who will not enter the Kingdom of God. The story is told to him as an evangelistic effort to bring him to the true sense of his sinfulness and consequently to cry for mercy. On the surface the story seems like a simple story about being kind.

This story is about limitless love. It is about a man who said I will care for another with no limit. I will love this man, though he is my enemy and another stranger to me. Whatever it is that this man needs, I will give him and there are no limits. He has an open account.

This story, for most people, is about helping someone in need. That's not really the point. This is really a story about how one inherits eternal life because that is the question that initiated the entire conversation to which this story is the conclusion.

“*“Lord, may your love always be the foundation of my life. And may my love for you express itself in an eagerness to do good for others.”*”

## Daily Bible Study

This is another parable that appears only in Luke, and is perhaps one of the best known parables of Jesus. The term “Good Samaritan” has been given to hospitals, and even to laws which encourage those who see others in life threatening situations to offer assistance without fear of reprisals.

Unfortunately, this parable has been given all kinds of allegorical interpretations which have obscured the simple meaning of the lesson. As with all parables, there is a tendency to read too much into the parable. Let’s see if we can discover the simple, direct message Jesus taught on this occasion.

### Monday

- What is the setting of this parable (See: Luke 10:25-29)?
- What was a “lawyer” as used in the context of Luke 10:25?
- What was the lawyer’s purpose for posing his questions to Jesus?

### Tuesday

- What is involved in the commandments to “love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (See: Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18)?

### Wednesday

- How was the lawyer seeking to “justify himself” by asking, “And who is my neighbor” (Luke 10:29)?
- Describe the main points of the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

### Thursday

- What is significant about a priest and a Levite passing the wounded man?
- Who were the Samaritans, and why were they so despised by the Jews (See: John 4:9; 2 Kings 17:24-41)?
- What is significant about the extent to which the Samaritan goes to take care of the wounded man?

### Friday

- Describe how Jesus reworded the question of the lawyer, and what that implies (Luke 10:29, 36).
- Who is our neighbor?
- What does this parable teach us about the cost of being compassionate toward others?





# THE PHARISEE AND TAX COLLECTOR

**READ Luke 18:9-14**

*“The Pharisee standing by himself, prayed thus: God I thank you that I am not like the other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.”*  
– Luke 18:11

We moderns have a similar prayer to the self-righteous Pharisee, but we offer it with the best of intentions, just as I suspect the Pharisee did in his day, “But for the grace of God go I”. Have you ever quietly, or not so quietly, uttered those oft-repeated words? Yet, Jesus seems to hear our prayers in a bit different manner than we intend. Jesus senses the air of self-righteousness that sneaks into any prayer noting the differences between God’s children, each broken in their own unique way. Perhaps we ought to pause and consider this parable a bit more closely.

This parable, a classic tale of evaluating our lives against the lives of others, is a reminder to not take our self too seriously on the ‘grading scale’ of God’s righteousness. Our comparison is never with those broken a little (or a lot) worse than we are; rather, the standard is clearly the Son, Jesus Himself. And oh how the comparison changes with that standard.

So ‘stand down’ and resist the temptation to engage in the comparison game. Instead, embrace the call to see your own brokenness before reaching out to your oikos. Now watch as God begins to water your efforts in planting seeds in the life of your oikos. Ask God to help you resist the temptation to see the brokenness of those brothers and sisters that God has called you to love.

“Lord Jesus, thanks for the reminder as I begin to seriously engage those in my oikos, those precious brothers and sisters that you have called me to love and care for. Remind me that I am just one beggar helping a dear friend to discover where I found life giving bread. Amen.”

## Daily Bible Study

Churches and Temples have a way of scaring away those who need God most in their lives. The tax collector, like so many who need God and His people most, stayed 'far away' from the house of prayer. Jesus often lamented how the houses of God had become increasingly difficult for the 'unrighteous' to approach God. As you read this parable throughout the week consider how your oikos feels about approaching your place of worship. And just as importantly, how might you go about making Chapin Baptist a place where 'tax collectors' feel welcome?

### Monday

- Why did Jesus tell this parable according to Luke?
- In what ways have you trusted in your self-righteousness?
- Who do you think Jesus was addressing with this parable?

### Tuesday

- Who were the two men who went up to pray in the temple?
- What is the biggest difference between the two men?

### Wednesday

- Describe the Pharisee and how he went about praying.
- Describe the tax collector and how he went about praying.

### Thursday

- Explain the difference in the prayer of the two men.
- Explain the significance of the Pharisee standing by himself.
- Do you think the tax collector was by himself when he prayed?

### Friday

- What does Jesus mean when He said, "...went to his house justified"?
- When you pray is it more like the Pharisee or the tax collector? Why?
- Why does the tax collector remain 'far off' when he prays? How might Chapin Baptist become a 'temple' where tax collectors feel welcomed?







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